

Message Text

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TAGS: OVIP(CARTER, JIMMY) PERP US VE

SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S TRIP TO CARACAS

SUMMARY: THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP HAD VERY POSITIVE IMPACT, WITH SYMBOLIC GESTURES, SUCH AS PRESENTATIONS IN SPANISH, BEING VERY WELL RECEIVED. THE WIDE-RANGING SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS SERVED TO CLARIFY THE MANY AREAS OF POLICY CONVERGENCE AND SEVERAL AREAS OF DIVERGENCE. VENEZUELAN OFFICIALDOM AND MEDIA WERE UNIFORMLY VERY ENTHUSIASTIC. WHILE AVERAGE VENEZUELAN RECEIVED PRESIDENT MORE WITH POLITENESS AND CURIOSITY THAN WILD ENTHUSIASM, TRIP ADMIRABLY SERVED ITS FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSE OF DEMONSTRATING U.S. COMMITMENT TO LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AS WELL AS PAYING TRIBUTE TO VENEZUELA'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD AND DEMOCRATIC EXAMPLE. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT CARTER'S VISIT HAS STRENGTHENED CORDIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND VENEZUELA. IN LATIN AMERICA NO OTHER AMERICAN PRESIDENT SINCE FDR AND JFK HAS SO TOUCHED THE POPULAR IMAGINATION.

2. THE VERY POSITIVE IMPACT THE PRESIDENT MADE IN THIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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20-YEAR OLD DEMOCRACY CAN BE ATTRIBUTED IN GREAT MEASURE ON HIS OPEN, RELAXED AND SINCERE STYLE AND THE THE FACT THAT HE TOOK THE TROUBLE TO MAKE HIS ARRIVAL STATEMENT IN SPANISH AND REPEATED THE PERFORMANCE WHEN HE ADDRESSED THE GATHERING IN FRONT OF THE PANTHEON.

3. CONTRIBUTING TO THE WARM CONFIDENT STYLE WERE

THE FACTS THAT HE BROUGHT HIS SMALL DAUGHTER, STRIKING AN IMPORTANT NOTE WITH FAMILY-ORIENTED VENEZUELAN, THAT HE WENT INTO THE CROWD WITH HIS FRIENDLY SMILE SHAKING HANDS ON ALL SIDES, DESPITE TIGHT SECURITY, PLUS HIS FINE SENSE OF COURTESY AND DIGNITY.

4. EMBASSY AND USIS OFFICERS STILL ARE RECEIVING COMPLIMENTARY COMMENTS FROM VENEZUELAN FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S SPANISH. TV AUDIENCES WERE SURPRISED AND PLEASED WHEN HE SPOKE IN SPANISH AT THE AIRPORT, HIS REMARKS COMING ON THE HEELS OF THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF PRESIDENT PEREZ' WELCOME. LATER A GASP OF DELIGHT WENT UP FROM THE THROG GATHERED AT THE PANTHEON WHEN HE AGAIN SPOKE IN SPANISH. THE EFFORT WON THEIR HEARTS. BOTH STATEMENTS WERE BEEPERED TO VOA SIMULTANEOUSLY BY USIS AND BROADCAST THROUGHOUT THE HEMISPHERE BY THE VOICE OF AMERICA-SEVERAL TIMES.

5. MEDIA COVERAGE IN VENEZUELA ALL BUT PASSED THE SATURATION POINT WITH COVERAGE IN THE CARACAS DAILIES ALONE RUNNING TO 72 FULL-PAGE SPREADS, PLUS STORIES AND PHOTOS ON 67 OTHER PAGES, AND A TOTAL OF 247 PHOTOS. RADIO AND TV COVERED THE VISIT-EVERY STEP OF THE WAY.

6. THE MEDIA PORTRAYED CLEARLY THE CLOSENESS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO PRESIDENTS.
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7. THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT SERVED SEVERAL PURPOSES. FIRST, IT GAVE MAJOR MEDIA EMPHASIS TO THE IDEALS OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, NON-PROLIFERATION, ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE AND CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY. SECOND, IT SERVED AS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW A POWERFUL INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRY AND A RELATIVELY WEALTHY BUT SMALL DEVELOPING COUNTRY CAN WORK TO REDUCE BILATERAL DIFFERENCES AND EVEN TO MAKE PROGRESS TOWARD REDUCING FRICTION ON ISSUES OVER WHICH WE HAVE FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS, SUCH AS OPEC, NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE AND LAW OF THE SEA. THIRD, IT MADE CONCRETE THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENT TO A NEW LATIN AMERICAN POLICY WHICH EMPHASIZES THE UNIQUE CHARACTER OF EACH COUNTRY OF THE REGION. IN THIS REGARD THE PRESIDENT'S USE OF SPANISH AND THE CHOICE OF THE VENEZUELAN CONGRESS AS A SITE TO MAKE A MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENT ON NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS FLATTERED THE VENEZUELAN. THE VENEZUELAN WERE EXTREMELY PROUD TO HAVE AN AMERICAN PRESIDENT SINGLE OUT THEIR COUNTRY FOR A FIRST STOP IN SOUTH AMERICA. THE FACT THAT BRAZIL FOLLOWED VENEZUELA ALSO FILLED THEM WITH PRIDE.

8. VENEZUELAN OFFICIALDOM WAS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT BOTH THE SYMBOLIC AND SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS OF THE VISIT. THIS VIEW WAS ALSO SHARED BY THE LEADERS OF BOTH THE AD AND COPEI PARTIES. THE AVERAGE CITIZEN IN CARACAS GREETED THE PRESIDENT WITH A MEASURE OF EASY POLITENESS AND FRIENDLY CURIOSITY. VENEZUELAN SEEM TO LIKE PRESIDENT CARTER AND HOLD A SPECIAL AFFECTION FOR HIM. BUT THERE IS ALSO IN THE MAN IN THE STREET, DESPITE THE FRIENDLINESS OF THE VISIT, A SENSE OF PRIDE THAT VENEZUELA IN 1978 STANDS FOR SOMETHING AND THAT SOME OF WHAT VENEZUELA STANDS FOR IS AT VARIANCE WITH U.S. INTERESTS. THE FRIENDSHIP, THEN, IS MORE THAT OF EQUALS THAN IT HAS BEEN IN THE PAST. IN THE NET, THE VISIT WAS A GREAT SUCCESS. BOTH IN TERMS OF THE POSITIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PUBLIC REACTION AND THE PRIVATE SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS IT SERVED ITS PURPOSES ADMIRABLY.
VAKY

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